

5 minutes, the way legislation takes place here in the Senate. Remember what has happened in this bill. You can throw away all the words and look at where are we today.

There is a bill pending that the Democratic leader brought to the floor on the subject matter of whether there is speculation going on that affects the price of crude oil in a bad way, with bad conduct on the part of those who are participating. He brought a bill down to cure that. We have been told that is a small part of the problem. But the big part of the problem is supply and demand. We, the Republicans—joined by some Democrats, I am sure, if we ever had a chance to do it—are addressing the issue of supply and demand. That is the big issue. That is the issue that might indeed make some Americans smile instead of being so worried about their future because of the price of gasoline and what it is doing to them and to the American economy. We must have the right to freely amend that bill until we come to a consensus. That is how we get things done. But, remember, plain and simple, no matter what is said, we cannot do that.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The time of the Senator has expired.

**Mr. DOMENICI.** That is because the majority leader has precluded us procedurally from doing anything other than what he wants, what he will let us do. We cannot act the way the Senate should act on important issues.

I yield the floor.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** The Senator from Louisiana.

**Mr. VITTER.** Madam President, I too rise to talk about the single most important issue, bar none, facing American families—gasoline prices, energy. Again let me restate the obvious. This is the single most important issue facing all Louisiana families I represent, facing American families across the country. In that context, for families who struggle every week, particularly when they go to the gas station to fill up, particularly as they try to take family vacations in the summers or they struggle with their basic needs of commuting to work—those folks in ag, or transportation, doubly hit with diesel costs—we need to act, not talk but act in a meaningful way on this issue.

Let me first congratulate the majority leader. He has finally allowed a bill on the floor which at least touches on this issue. He has a bill before the Senate right now, the issue on the floor, that deals with speculation in energy, particularly oil and gas. That is an issue we should address head on and I applaud that.

But there is a big problem with how he has gone about running the Senate in this instance; that is, he has not allowed any meaningful amendment to that bill so that we can have an open debate and open amendment process about gasoline and energy.

Again, I am happy to look at the speculation issue and act on the specu-

lation issue. I support provisions that do that. But I do not know a single American who thinks that is nearly enough, that it addresses the bulk of the issue, that we should not move on to other crucial issues revolving around supply and demand.

Like virtually every Member of this body, I have introduced significant amendments that go to the heart of the matter, that impact supply and demand, that try to make us use less, bring down demand, conserve more, have greater fuel efficiency standards, new technology. But that would also have us find more right here at home. We have those resources here. Yet because of the ground rules laid down by the distinguished majority leader, we are not being allowed to call up any of those amendments, have that open debate, consider my ideas or the ideas of the 99 other Senators on both sides of the aisle. I urge the majority leader to abandon that approach and to get back to the best traditions of the Senate—open debate and an open amendment process. Specifically, in that vein:

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider S. 3268 in the following manner: that the bill be subject to energy-related amendments only and that amendments be considered in an alternating manner between the two sides of the aisle. I further ask unanimous consent that the bill remaining be the pending business to the exclusion of all other business other than privileged matters or items agreed to jointly by the two leaders.

I ask unanimous consent that the first seven amendments to be offered on the Republican side of the aisle by either the Republican leader or his designee be the following: an Outer Continental Shelf amendment, including a conservation provision; an oil shale amendment, including a conservation provision; an Alaska energy production amendment, including a conservation provision; the Gas Price Reduction Act, which has 44 cosponsors, myself included; a clean nuclear energy amendment; a coal-to-liquid fuel amendment, including a conservation provision; and a LIHEAP amendment.

**THE PRESIDING OFFICER.** In my capacity as Senator, I object.

**Mr. VITTER.** Madam President, I am obviously not surprised, but I continue to be disappointed. Gasoline prices—energy—are the single greatest challenge facing every Louisiana family. I know they are the greatest challenge facing Missouri families and families all across this country. Yet we are not acting on what most concerns folks about our collective future, our economic future, the future for our families. We must act.

The American people have a lot of sound common sense and they know there is no single answer, there is no silver bullet, there is not one thing that does everything, there is not one thing that can stabilize and immediately lower gasoline prices.

They know we need to do a number of things. Most of the American people,

like me, are perfectly willing to look at speculation and act on that issue. I support provisions to do that. But the American people also want to look at supply and demand. They want to decrease demand through conservation, through greater efficiency, through new technology, but they also want to increase supply, including finding more energy right here at home.

That includes a lot of oil and gas resources we have right here at home that we need for the short term and medium term. We need to do a number of these different things.

As I mentioned, I have introduced seven specific amendments. My amendments do a number of different things, both on the demand side and on the supply side, because we need to act on both sides of the equation. But, again, the ground rules the majority leader has established shut all that out so far. I certainly hope he reconsiders and changes those ground rules.

Those ground rules are offensive, quite frankly, to the traditions of the Senate. I came from the House. When I did, I heard the Senate was fundamentally different from the House; that the Senate was about open debate and open amendments and not controlled with limited debate and limited amendments such as the House.

Well, I found out the Senate, under this leadership, is different from the House. In the House we had a handful of amendments on every bill. In the Senate, we are even denied that. That is not the tradition of the Senate, and it is not how we have acted in the Senate on energy legislation in the recent past.

The last two times we considered energy legislation were in 2007 and in 2005. In 2007, when the price at the pump, by the way, was about \$3 a gallon, we spent 3 whole weeks on the bill, on the issue on the floor of the Senate, 3 weeks, nothing but that.

We had rollcall votes on 16 amendments. We had 22 rollcall votes total. We adopted a total of 49 amendments because several of those amendments were accepted without a vote. There were a total of 331 amendments proposed. That is when gas was \$3 a gallon.

A little further back, 2005, we also considered energy. By the way, at that time, gas was \$2.26 a gallon. We spent 2 whole weeks on the Senate floor, 2 entire weeks focused on nothing other than that, even though the price was almost \$2 per gallon less than it is now.

We had 19 rollcall votes on amendments; 23 total rollcall votes on the bill. We adopted 57 amendments and 235 were proposed. That is serious legislating on a serious issue.

Yet has energy gotten less serious since then or more? Well, you can track that with the price at the pump. It has gone from \$2.26 during that first debate, to \$3.06 during the second debate, to \$4, at least, now. The issue is more important than ever and merits our attention more than ever and merits a serious response more than ever.